



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 8
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Ref: EPR ER

INITIAL/FINAL POLLUTION REPORT St. Elmo Well Site Chaffee County, Colorado

I. HEADING

Date: August 26, 2003
From: Hays Griswold, On-Scene Coordinator
Agency: EPA
Unit: Region VIII - Emergency Response Program
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Denver Colorado 80202
(303) 312-6822
To: Kevin Mould, EPA Headquarters
POLREP No.: Initial/Final
Site: St. Elmo Well Site

II. BACKGROUND

Site Number: 08FU
Party Conducting the Action: EPA
Response Authority: CERCLA
CERCLIS No: CON 000802079
NPL Status: No
Action Memorandum Status: Approved - 12/03/02
Date Action Started: 11/06/02
Completion Date: 08/14/03

III. SITE INFORMATION

A. Incident Category

Classic Emergency, Fund-Lead.

B. Site Description

1. Site description

The Site is a Bed and Breakfast that the owner is in the process of building. It is located at 25850 County Road 162, St. Elmo, Colorado, 81236. Used oil and pentachlorophenol were dumped into a drinking water well. Nearby homes have



wells in the same aquifer and could be affected if the chemicals migrate outside the well into surrounding groundwater.

2. Removal Site Evaluation

The owner and his wife discovered that something was in their well when they noticed an odor in the water coming from the tap and the owner had to go to the hospital after drinking “two gulps” of the water. EPA was contacted after the owner could not find any other agency that could help. The OSC visited the Site on November 6, 2002; and, after seeing the containers from which the solvents/oil were dumped into the well and sampling the well water, the OSC initiated an emergency removal action at the property.

3. Description of threat

Pentachlorophenol and used oil were dumped into a private drinking water well; they are hazardous substances as defined by CERCLA Section 101(14). The presence of these substances in the well obviously contaminated the well and created a potential of contamination of the aquifer and other down-gradient wells in the area. The local agencies did not have the capability or financial ability to determine amount of contamination or to treat the water. Therefore, EPA and its contractors, responded to the scene.

IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

A. Situation

1. Removal actions

On November 6, 2002, the OSC, EPA's Emergency Response Contractor (ERRS), and representatives from the Chaffee County Sheriffs's Office mobilized to the Site:

- ▶ EPA/its ERRS contractor examined the containers from which the pentachlorophenol and used oil were dumped into the private drinking water well and sampled the well water (concentrations of pentachlorophenol and Volatile Organic Compounds [VOC] contamination in the drinking water were very high - well above the Maximum Contaminant Level [MCL]).
- ▶ The Chaffee County Sheriff's Office initiated an investigation of the dumping of the chemicals/solvents in the well.
- ▶ EPA commenced to remove the hazardous substances from the well by pumping and treatment, using activated carbon filtration.

2. Enforcement

Potential enforcement actions are being reviewed by Local/ State Agencies. EPA's point of contact will be its Criminal Investigation Division.

3. State and Local Role

The Local and State authorities were initially called by the homeowner regarding the problem but were uncertain of their jurisdiction. Chaffee County Sheriff's office asked EPA for help in the Removal, was present during the assessment, and initiated a criminal investigation. Neither the State nor local authorities have the resources to conduct a removal action at this time.

B. Future Plans

The well water concentrations of pentachlorophenol and VOC-contamination are now below the MCL. The work at this site was performed in compliance with the NCP, and the Removal Action is considered complete as of August 14, 2003.

C. Key Issues

None at this time.

V. COST INFORMATION

Total costs have not been received at this time but will be less than the budget ceiling of \$200,000 which was established in the Action Memorandum.